



Perceived Graduate Employability at the Austrian-Czech Cross-border Region

How linguistic diversity impacts effectiveness of
daily operations in technical fields

Martina Gaisch, Victoria Rammer, Stefanie Sterrer, Silke Preymann

OVERVIEW

- Graduate Employability
- Research
 - Approach
 - Design
- Empirical findings
- Conclusion

A person wearing a dark blue suit jacket and a white shirt is sitting at a desk. They are using a silver laptop. A brown messenger bag is resting on the desk in front of them. The background is a blurred office setting with a white wall and a small potted plant.

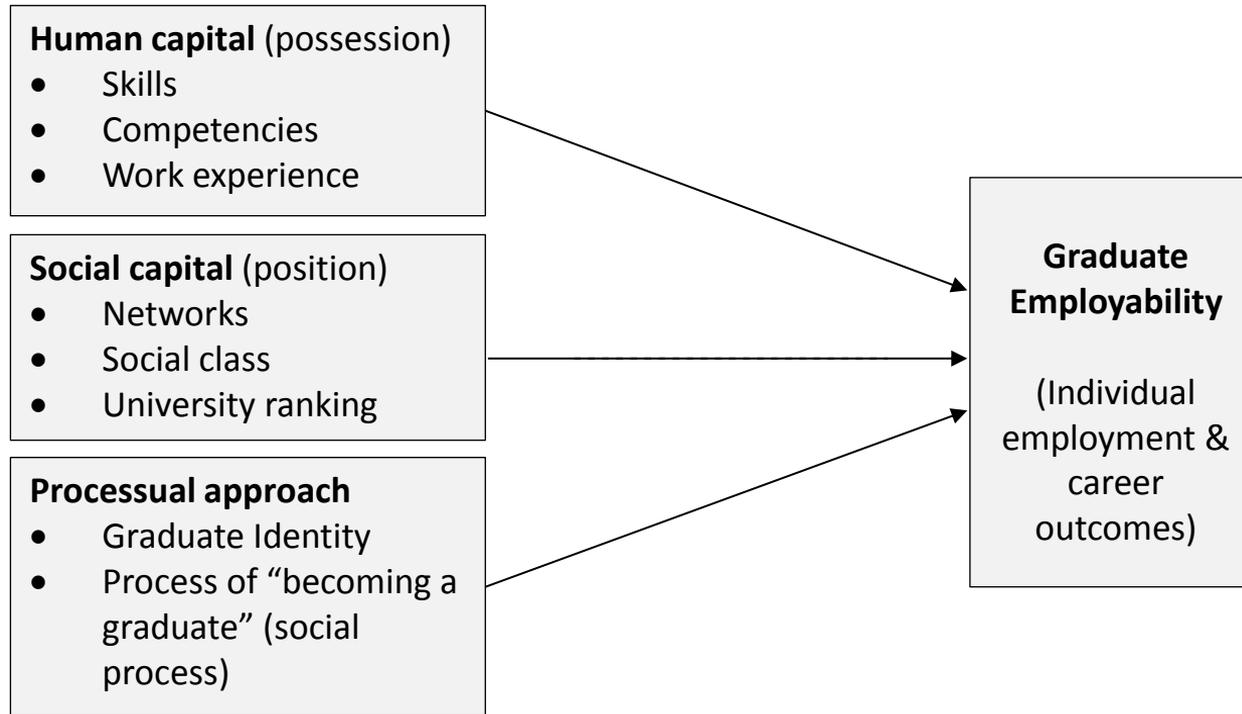
Graduate Employability

GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

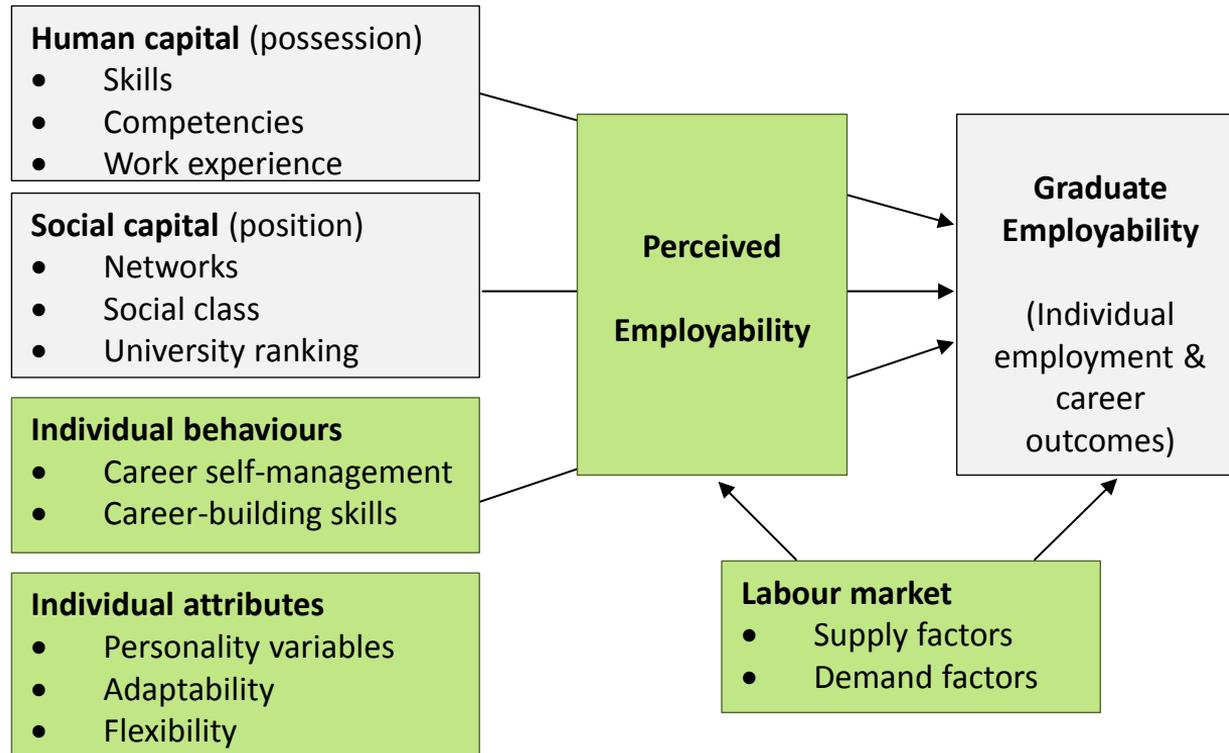
“Employability means that students and graduates can discern, acquire, adapt and continually enhance the skills, understandings and personal attributes that make them more likely to find and create meaningful paid and unpaid work that benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy”

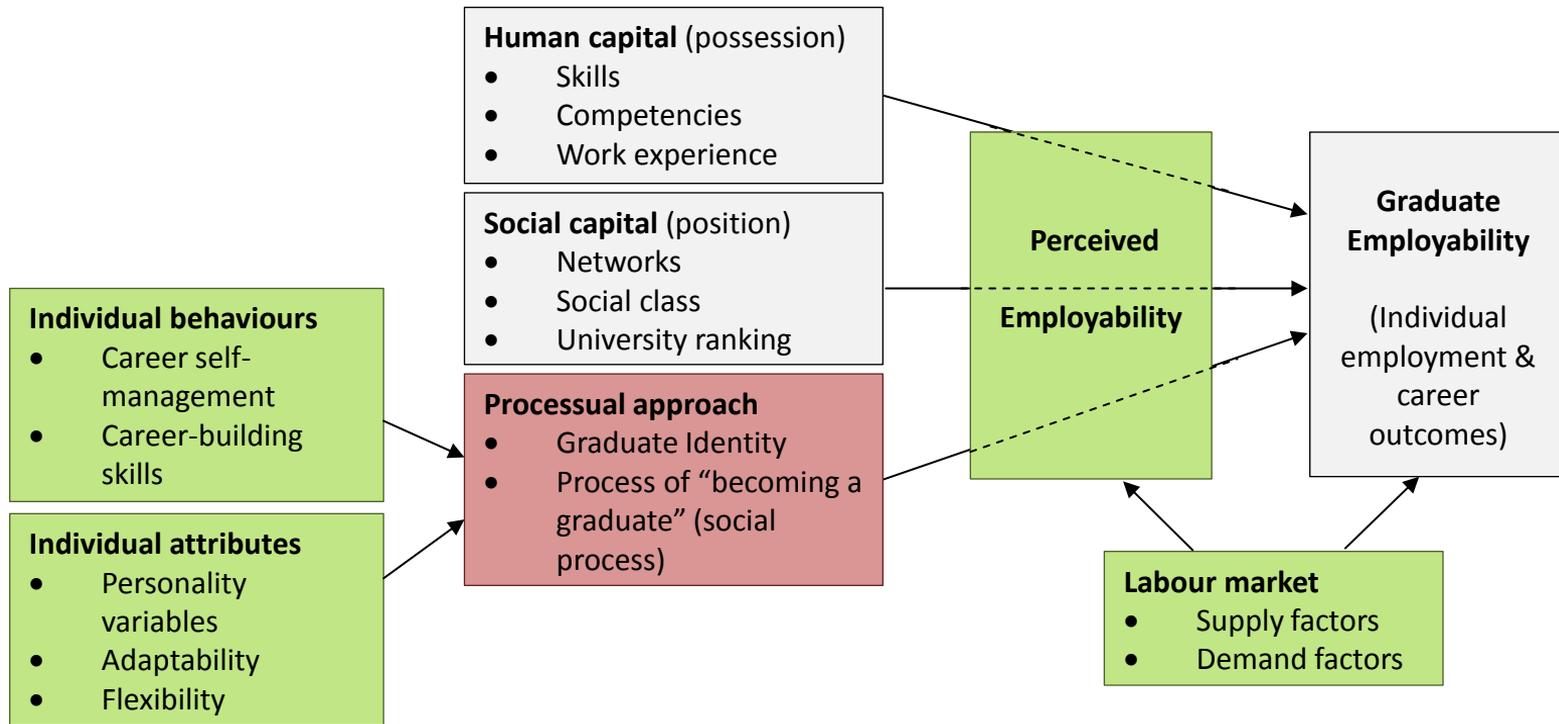
(Oliver, 2015)

GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY (HOLMES, 2013)



GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY (CLARKE, 2017)





■ Stated by both Holmes (2013) and Clarke (2017)
 ■ Stated by Holmes (2013)
 ■ Stated by Clarke (2017)

A top-down view of a wooden desk. On the left is a silver laptop with a black screen. To its right is a white mug filled with dark coffee. Further right is a yellow pencil and a small piece of yellow sticky note. There are also some crumpled pieces of yellow paper on the desk. A semi-transparent grey rectangle is overlaid in the center, containing the text.

Research Approach and Design

RESEARCH APPROACH

- Enhancement of graduate employability in technical degree programs (informatics, logistics, civil and mechanical engineering) of the Austrian-Czech border region through content language integrated learning (German, Czech and/or English)
- Identify the perceived core skills that local industries at the Austrian-Czech cross border region require
- Perceptions about country-specific work requirements, social capital and professional skills
- Importance of foreign language skills (German, Czech and/or English) in the cross-boarder region

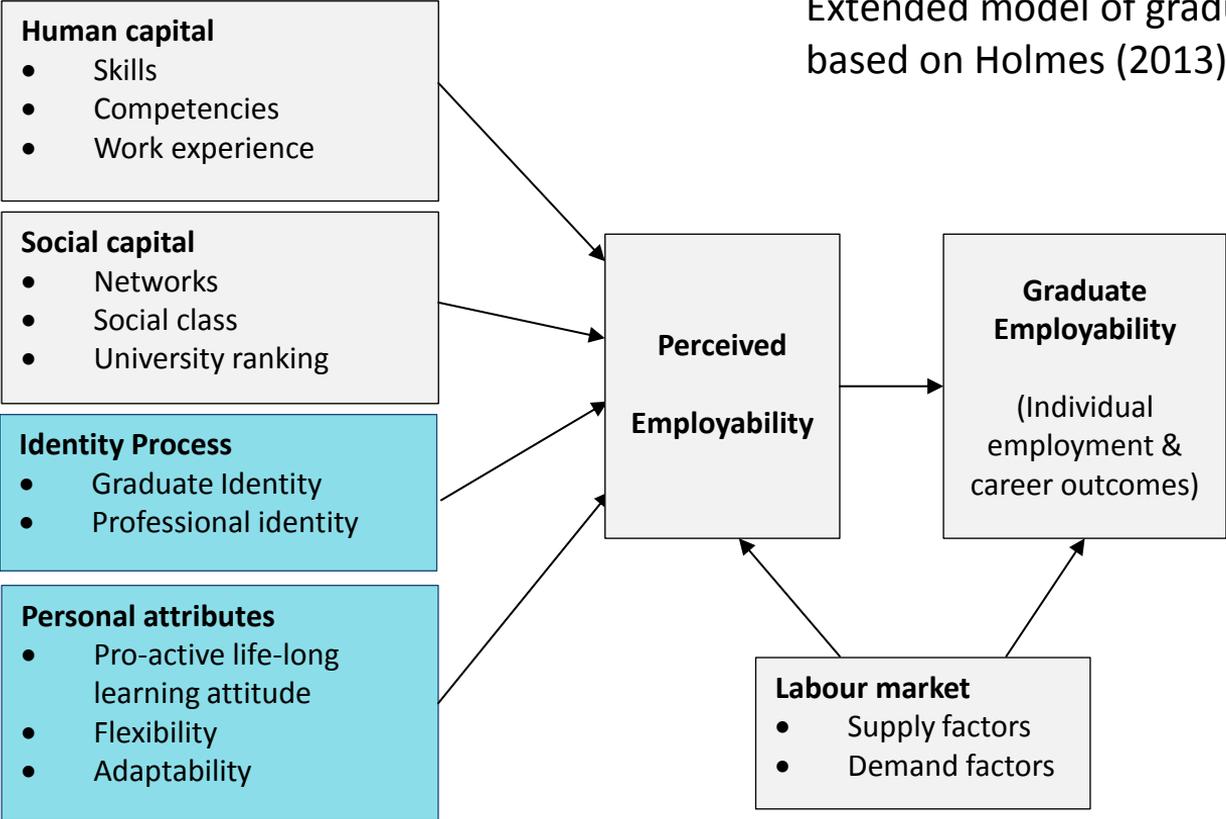
RESEARCH DESIGN

Gender	Male Female	7 1
Duration of the interview	Min Max	16 minutes 37 minutes
Countries	Austria Czech	4 people 4 people
Disciplines	Informatics Logistics Civil engineering Logistics Mechatronics	3 people 3 people 1 people * ¹ 1 people 1 people * ¹
Work experience within the company	Min Max	8 month 2 years
Higher Education Institution	Academically-oriented Professionally-oriented	7 * ² 2 * ²
Total participants		8 participants
<p>*1 one participant graduated both from civil engineering and mechatronics degree programme</p> <p>*2 one participant graduated both from an academically and professionally-oriented HEI</p>		

A modern conference room with a large table, chairs, and a projector, overlaid with a semi-transparent box containing the text 'Empirical Findings'.

Empirical Findings

Extended model of graduate employability based on Holmes (2013) and Clarke (2017)



EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

	Austria		Czech Republic
	Professionally-oriented education	Academically-oriented education	Academically-oriented education
Human capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical knowledge and ready-to-use skills • Implementation competence • Experience in real life project work due to hands-on training • Matching skills to immediate task requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep theoretical knowledge / scientific mind-set • Self-organised learning and organisational skills • Quick perception of complex correlations • Logical and analytical skills • Abstract thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic knowledge of soft skills • Knowledge of different methods and models

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

	Austria	Czech Republic
	<p>Professionally-oriented education</p>	<p>Academically-oriented education</p>
Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduation in a technical field is the key to success in the cross-border region• Technical degrees are perceived as a supreme discipline• Easy to find a job within this field• No need for network and gate-openers• Industry is in desperate need of engineers- therefore no perceived difference in terms of gender, ethnicity, social class, network, university ranking/status• Except for part-time position (hard to get one in technology industry)	

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

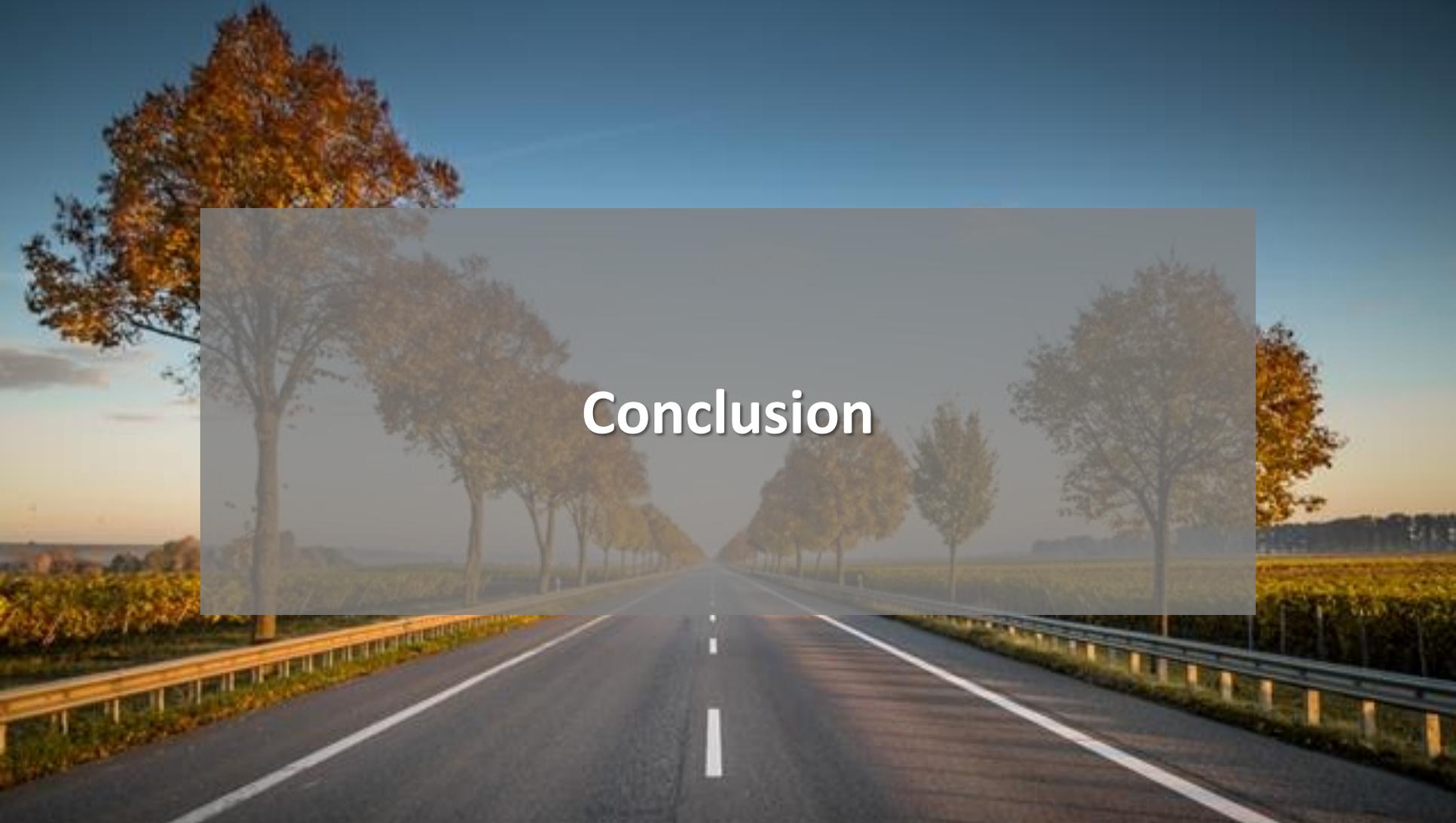
	Austria		Czech Republic
	Professionally-oriented education	Academically-oriented education	Academically-oriented education
Identity process	Graduate Identity		Professional Identity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title of “Diplom-Ingenieur” it is seen as a German quality criterion of high-class engineering competence 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take pride in being employed at an international company
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciates a safety net (mentors, structures) Good at routine tasks and ready to use skills Proficient in applying standardized schemes has a great repertoire of tools and process knowledge High service orientation (done for you) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical/abstract thinking and highly analytical 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sink or swim Being capable and proud of doing non-routine tasks No identified need for safety net (mentors, structures) Do-it-yourself attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived need for mentors Earn trust to get more responsibility Team cohesion and cross-border teamwork are key

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

	Austria	Czech Republic
	<p>Professionally-oriented education</p>	<p>Academically-oriented education</p>
Personal attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life-long learning attitude and a sound understanding of the necessity for continuous adaptation• Development of independent working habits• Self-motivation and pro-active attributes• Enhancement of soft skills and interpersonal communication skills	

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

	Austria		Czech Republic
	Professionally-oriented education	Academically-oriented education	Academically-oriented education
Foreign language skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content over from • Willingness to brush up or deepen English skills – on demand • Awareness of better command of foreign language skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient English skills seen as obvious matter • sense of status • clear expectations that Czech employees speak German and English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language competences are one of the most important parts. • Content over form • Corporate language is English despite some documentation in German • Czech language skills are seen as a sign of respect and appreciation



Conclusion

CONCLUSION

- Further perspective on the processual dimension / identity process
 - Graduate identity (Austria)
 - Professional identity (Czech)
- Perceived benefits of content and language integrated learning at the tertiary level
- Foreign language proficiency may have the potential to further improve graduate employability
- Better understanding of cross-border regions through foreign language skills

REFERENCES

- Clarke, M. (2017). Rethinking graduate employability: the role of capital, individual attributes and context. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-15.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The psychologist*, 26(2), 120-123.
- Gaisch, M., Rammer, V., Hrušková, L. & Krátká, J. (2017). A cross-cultural study between Austria and the Czech Republic on required competencies beyond technical expertise. *Proceedings of Cross-cultural Business Conference 2017*. Steyr.
- Holmes, L. (1995). *Skills: a social perspective*. Transferable skills in higher education, London: Kogan Page.
- Holmes, L. (2000). What can performance tell us about learning? Explicating a troubled concept. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 9(2), 253-266.
- Holmes, L. (2013). Competing perspectives on graduate employability: possession, position or process? *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(4), 538-554.
- Holmes, L., Green, M., & Egan, S. (1998). *Graduates in smaller businesses: A pilot study*. final report on a project funded by the Government Office for London, Management Research Centre, The Business School, University of North London.
- Okay-Somerville, B., & Scholarios, D. (2017). Position, possession or process? Understanding objective and subjective employability during university-to-work transitions. *Studies in higher education*, 42(7), 1275-1291.
- Oliver, B. (2015). Redefining graduate employability and work-integrated learning: Proposals for effective higher education in disrupted economies. *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*, 6(1), 56-65.
- Yorke, M. (2006), *Employability in higher education: What it is—What it is not*. Learning and Employability Series, 1.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project “CLIL” has been funded with support from the European Commission, the European Fund for Regional development (EFRE), and the Federal State of Upper Austria under the program “European territorial Co-operation Austria-Czech Republic 2014-2020”.





Perceived Graduate Employability at the Austrian-Czech Cross-border Region

How linguistic diversity impacts effectiveness of
daily operations in technical fields

Website: <http://clil.vstecb.cz/>

ResearchGate: *CLIL-Content-and-Language-Integrated-Learning-at-the-Tertiary-Level*